

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2013**

**Held at
Munster Town Hall,
1005 Ridge Road, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Five (5) Commission members were present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Anthony Broadnax
Ron McAhron
Tom Gozdecki

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Visitors:

Kalliope Dedelow – Munster
Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Councilman
Dan Gardner – Lake County Surveyor's
Office
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart
LuAnn Franklin – The Times
Dave Wellman - RDA
Linda Sorn - USACE
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
David Nellans – Munster Town Councilman
Fred Baginski - Hammond
John Mulesa - Munster
John Broderick - Munster
Jayson Reeves – HURN Foundation, Gary
Anthony Kenning – Munster
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek - Hammond

Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the June 12th meeting. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed 5-0 with a roll call vote.

Chairman Baker stated that after working with the support of many people, we have obtained a perpetual funding source for maintenance. There is about 25 years of deferred maintenance that needs to be done on this \$250 million man-made project. That is what this Commission is currently working on. The infrastructure of the project must be taken care of. We continue to meet regularly with municipalities and appropriate representatives to discuss emergency management so all communities are prepared in a flood event.

Chairman Baker referred to Executive Director Dan Repay to give a report. Mr. Repay referred to the July claims approval sheet in the amount of \$2,536,901.33 and explained several of the claims. The largest claim of \$2,430,000 is a State obligation to pay back the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority. C&H Mowing has completed the mowing of the levees two different times. Because of heavy rains, a second mowing was needed sooner than normal. Wiltjer Excavating has been cleaning out several blockages/felled trees in various areas. Chairman Baker explained that the \$2,430,000 is a portion of the \$6 million that was a loan to the Commission. At the time, it helped the Commission continue with acquisition to keep the project moving forward. The recently-passed State Statute calls for the repayment of the \$6 million in installments. He also stated that it is important that we remove the trees that cause obstruction. It will change the dynamics but it must be done. Mr. Broadnax asked if we had a continuing contract with Pro-Pump; Mr.

Repay replied that we do not, but we use them as needed. Mr. Wichlinski confirmed that the payment to Earth Werks was the final payment to them for the rehabilitation project at Forest Avenue. Discussion ensued on the problem with the continuing blockage at Martin Luther King; we need to look at a long term fix because it is consistently blocking up. Mr. Broadnax asked who our contact is now for the city of Gary and Mr. Repay answered that he has communicated with the Gary fire chief if needed. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$2,536,901.33; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Mr. Repay reported that bids will be due and opened for the reconstruction of the Columbia Avenue Bridge, with initial construction anticipated this year. That contract will be paid for jointly by the city of Hammond, town of Munster, Lake County Highway Dept, and the Commission. The Lake County Highway Dept. will award and oversee that contract.
- We will be removing the piers by the Monon RR tracks.
- Russell Tree Service began removal of trees from Northcote to Columbia. Homer Tree Service will begin this Wednesday in their sections of Kennedy to Northcote and then from Columbia to the I-80/94 overpass.
- Several blockages have been removed since the last meeting. High winds took down several trees from Main Street to the river.
- Grimmer Construction has been selected as the responsive low bidder for the Gary South Levee maintenance project. Once their insurance and bonding is in place and contract is signed, they will need about 60 days to complete.
- The manufacturer for the pump at Burr Street is working on the pump and getting a report back to us as to why it keeps failing.
- Mr. Repay will meet with IDEM, NIPSCO, and Lake County Solid Waste regarding the illegal dumping problem on rights-of-ways in Gary.
- Chairman Baker added that we had obstructions removed from the river as part of the Monon railroad bridge trail project. Mr. Repay added that 4 of the 8 piers were removed from the train trestle to alleviate additional blockages. "Friends of the Little Calumet River" has been involved in working together helping plan long term solutions for security and how best to utilize the area. NIPSCO has also been a great help.
- The watershed study is ongoing. About 113 different projects have been identified as needing attention; they are ranking the projects in priority. Draft report has been received and Mr. Repay will share it with Board members. Final report is due in August.
- We are continuing to work on having the Grant Street culvert removed as well as the old access roads that were put in by INDOT.
- Work will be done on Hart Ditch to channel more water to go to the east quicker. A DNR permit is needed and we are working on that. Project may be able to be bid out in the fall.
- Commissioner Broadnax asked how the tree cutting contract was going. Mr. Repay said that Russell Tree Service has 60 days to complete the tree removal in their area. They are trying to work off the public land rather than the private land. We want to see them complete the job before August 9, when a major baseball tournament starts.
- Commissioner Wichlinski asked about pump inspections. Mr. Repay replied we are doing them ourselves. It is important that the pump stations/gages work properly so they can be viewed online, especially during a rain event. A tour was taken at the National Weather Service in Romeoville and it was helpful to see how they predict and forecast the weather.
- Commissioner Broadnax asked when the Columbia Avenue bridge raising will be done and Mr. Repay answered that bids will be opened next week. We will be participating in the funding of that project but it will be the Lake County Highway Department's project.

- Mr. Repay proceeded with a power point presentation showing pictures of areas following the April rain event. The magnitude of the blockages and downed trees were shown. Chairman Baker commented on the machine that Wiltjer Excavating has that goes inside the river to remove the obstructions. It really works great in populated areas. Some photos are on display for viewing.
- Chairman Baker commented that we received over \$6 million in maintenance money and we will utilize as much as we can this construction season. We will concentrate at the east end of the project area where it was constructed first in segments. There was never money in place for maintenance. Commission Gozdecki commented that it is a good idea to develop priority projects that will afford as much protection as we can for the public. Commissioner Broadnax commented that we will be having a lot of projects going on through September and it is a good mix of protection and recreation both.

Statements from the floor:

- Jason Reeves, representing The HURN Foundation in Gary, distributed a letter and pictures to Board. He expressed a concern about Chase Street being closed and would like to see it reopened at some point.
 - Laurie Czulno from State Line, Hammond asked about the State line tie-back design. Mr. Repay answered that they have agreed to purchase the blocks. It will be a semi-permanent solution but will serve the purpose in a rain event situation. State Line was the weak link in this last rain event and, although Hammond was ready to sand bag if needed, installing the blocks would be a better solution.
 - Robert Grow from Northcote in Munster agreed that Chase Street should be reopened at some point. Mr. Repay stated that we have had the culverts on Chase Street removed. Part of the agreement with the city of Gary is that we would put them back in if the city ever wanted to put the road back into service. At this point, the water is free flowing there.
 - Ken Vavrek from State Line in Hammond thanked Mr. Repay for monitoring the April rain event in his area. He thought the Commission should engage in an engineering study on re-diverting more of the water to the east in a rain event. He thought the diverter could be restricted more to allow the water to flow more to the east and not the west. Mr. Repay agreed that more water does need to be channeled to the east during a rain event so it can be managed better. He is hoping to address that and we are awaiting State approval so we can move forward.
 - John Mulesa from Munster questioned the removal of the trees in Hart Ditch and whose responsibility it was. Mr. Repay stated that we are not clearing the trees along the bank of Hart Ditch, only the blockages there. Chairman Baker added that some ditches are regulated, some are unregulated; we want to make sure the entire system is addressed. Hart Ditch is the main stem leading into the river. He questioned why the gages were not working and Mr. Repay answered that it is being addressed and corrections will be made. Commissioner McAhron added that the official system is run by the U.S.G.S. The gages we had installed were an enhancement to that system. Mr. Repay again stated that the visit to the National Weather Service in Romeoville was very helpful and their desire is that more gages would be installed and working in our area.
- Mr. Mulesa again talked about removing the culvert and roadways at Grant that are not needed. Mr. Repay stated that he has secured approval from NIPSCO and INDOT and they have agreed to take the roadways out.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Chairman Baker announced that the next meeting is scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, August 14th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.

